



CHRISTIANITY and CRISIS

A Bi-Weekly Journal of Christian Opinion

British Experience and American Power

The visit of the two Communist bosses, Bulganin and Khrushchev, to the British government has not brought any immediate results. At least the Russians have proved themselves adamant in preserving their freedom in the sale of arms to any nation, though this freedom may be made compatible with a joint guarantee by the Russians and the West of peace in the Middle East. We do not know whether any progress was made in easing other tensions in the world.

But we must not permit this dearth of immediate fruits of the conference, nor the understandable unfriendly reaction of the British crowds, to obscure the significance of this particular visit to London. Perhaps the greatest significance lies in the fact that it was to London rather than Washington that the Russian bosses were invited. They could not have been invited to Washington without precipitating a major crisis in American politics. The difference in climate between the two countries does not derive from any softness toward communism in Britain. It is simply due to the difference in the political maturity of the two nations. We have achieved world hegemony very quickly and have had no apprenticeship in the art of carrying our great responsibilities. Our authority is derived from our wealth and not from experience in world affairs. Only recently we were tempted to isolationism. We have overcome that temptation; but the world suspects us of succumbing to the opposite temptation of heedlessness in wielding our power. We are certainly more inflexible in policy than the new Russian leadership is. In Asia we are in the toils of a fiction that the Communists triumphed in China because we gave inadequate support to the Nationalists. This fiction binds us to the Chinese Nationalists and makes us adamant in the refusal

to admit Communist China to the United Nations. We are consequently the symbol of "imperialism" in the Orient though it was the British, and not we, who had imperialistic connections in Asia.

Perhaps it was the British success in preserving their health and morale while liquidating an empire which was the chief fruit and symbol of the British political maturity. It certainly stands in stark contrast to the French embarrassments about her empire, which she has not been able either to hold or to liquidate. The British success has certainly not been uniform. She was reluctant about Israel, though she is more unequivocal about the necessity of its present support than we are. In Cyprus she is following a self-defeating policy of suppression of nationalism, probably because desperation about the last military bastion in the Mediterranean has corrupted her wisdom.

But by and large it is significant that the British ex-imperialists are more respected on the colored continents than we are, who had only a single imperialistic venture in the Philippines. Britain has therefore become the natural broker between America and Russia, on the one hand, and between us the Asian nations, on the other hand. Britain has achieved this position despite the psychological hazards attendant upon being displaced by us as the hegemonous power of the free world. Put in another way, the world is being held together by American power, frequently deflected, though not always guided, by the wider experience of British statecraft. This is the significance of the "Anglo-Saxon" alliance at the heart of the free world. It is one of those providential factors in history which no one could have contrived but for which we can only be grateful.

This combination of experience and power in

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the Anglo-Saxon world becomes the more important as the Communist strategy has broken out of the sterile rigidities of Stalinism and counters us with pragmatic flexibility. No one can say how far and fast the changes in Russian policy may go. The only certain thing about them is that the new flexibility makes the Communists more formidable foes immediately and that it arouses an ever so faint hope that, in the long run, the Communist mania may abate and both Russia and the world-wide secular religion of communism may become sufficiently chastened to become an uneasy partner in the community of nations. It would be an analogy to the final domestication of the French revolution and the concomitant Bonapartist absolutism. Napoleon and Stalin both have had their day, and the community of mankind may finally benefit from the abatement of the second mania as it did from that of the first. If this should be the result, the partnership of British experience and American power would have contributed largely to the result.

Winston Churchill, in the first volume of his monumental *A History of the English-Speaking Peoples*, has given us a moving account of the various "accidents" and chances which were woven into the drama of the peculiar history of the Anglo-Saxon race. He is no determinist and therefore he has a strong feeling for the "providential" factors which entered into our common history, beyond the contrivance of men. This final chapter of the partnership of the comparatively experienced uncle and the very powerful nephew will undoubtedly be a fitting climax of his history. It will be the more moving because the author is one of the chief architects of that partnership.

R.N.

ABUNDANCE AND THE CHURCH

THE THIRD National Study Conference on the Church and Economic Life which met in Pittsburgh in April was called to consider the spiritual and moral problems created by the American economy of abundance. This was a new subject, as previous conferences of this type have emphasized injustices, conflicts and instabilities in the economy rather than the opportunities and temptations of abundance.

The fact that a quarter of the people in this

country do not share this abundance was emphasized. The responsibilities of our people in the face of the poverty that still exists in most of the world was greatly stressed in an address by Paul Hoffman, in the report of one of the groups and in the conference message. This message, an excellent statement, deals extremely well with the problems of justice at home and in our relations with other peoples, and it is forthright in calling for constructive substitutes for the present military expenditures which should be reduced "at the earliest time and to the greatest extent that is consistent with the safety of the free world."

The conference rightly assumed that abundance is a good gift of God and that we should not feel guilty because our response to it is not one of ascetic renunciation. While there was recognition of many specific temptations, especially those involving individual choice, there seemed to be little sense of the objective forces in the economy which bring increasing pressure on us to consume in order to keep the dynamic production system going. Dr. Kraemer, a voice from Europe, made the only emphatic statement of this dilemma, thought it was well brought out in a preparatory paper by Dr. Reinhold Niebuhr.

The National Council when it discusses economics rightly gives the largest place to laymen who have the relevant knowledge and direct responsibility. At this conference it seemed that the church did not bring enough theological guidance to the discussion. We seem to be getting in the American churches, without the benefit of theological criticism, a three-fold lay social gospel: the gospel of Christian businessmen, of Christian representatives in labor, and of Christian farmers. Most of the addresses at the conference were expressions of those three gospels. They were not put over against each other, except that the farmers have become the group that feels victimized and misunderstood. The optimism of all three groups about their virtue as groups and, except for the farmers, about their prospects made one think that the uncritical attitudes of the earlier social gospel had returned, and that there was a very wide gulf between the outlook of American laymen and the thought of most American theologians, as well as the outlook of Christians in most other countries. The National Council and our churches generally might well face the question: what does the church

as church bring to the thought of its members apart from ethical advice with which in principle they agree? Can it give them a perspective from which to view the objective forces in our culture by which the minds of all of us are so easily formed, and our decisions so often determined?

J. C. B.

CAMPAIGN PREVIEW

THE ANNOUNCEMENT of Mr. Nixon's "availability" for the vice-presidential nomination raises in a vivid way the question of the kind of campaign we may expect next fall. Not a few Republican hearts, along with most Democratic hearts, will react to Mr. Nixon's announcement with misgivings. Mr. Nixon has managed to project the image of himself as, on the one hand, the clean-cut American boy who has made good, and, on the other hand, the devious (and sometimes not-so-devious) malinger of his opponents, who manages to insinuate a great deal more than he actually says by way of impugning the integrity and patriotism of those who oppose him. It will be interesting, and somewhat fateful, to see in which direction the national image of Mr. Nixon focuses during the ensuing months.

But the question of campaign ethics need not be limited simply to Mr. Nixon. The action of the contestants in Democratic primaries has given rise to certain misgivings also. Mr. Kefauver has managed to create the impression that an ability to shake hands, remain folksy, and promise all things to all men, is a sufficient set of qualifications for the presidency. It may be true, as has been said, that nobody likes him but the people, but the question must be raised whether or not it is either good politics or good morals to promise the people so much more than any individual short of Superman could ever hope to deliver.

If Mr. Kefauver is saying too much, it may be that Mr. Stevenson is saying too little. He has thus far failed to capture the imaginations of voters in the way his admirers had hoped he would. Any new aggressiveness on his part should be sought not by trying to outdo Mr. Kefauver in total number of handshakes, but by trying to recapture some of the moral indignation and moral probing which made his '52 campaign such a memorable one. Mr. Stevenson's followers may feel that he is right on many issues, but he has not given the impression of being either passionately right or passionately concerned.

As a result, there are no indications thus far from any quarter that the fall campaign is going to be distinguished by a real coming to grips with issues.

R. M. B.

MONACO AND WE-THE-PEOPLE

IN INTELLECTUAL circles it was the fashion to view the recent proceedings in Monaco with an indulgently disdainful eye, but most eggheads were so knowledgeable in expressing disdain that one suspects they had followed the dispatches from Monaco as avidly as had everyone else.

This marriage of a first-rate actress to a third-rate monarch involved perennially fascinating motifs. We commoners are always thrilled by royalty. And this was a royal wedding on both sides. The expression "movie queen" is not purely metaphorical. It includes high rank in that special class known as "celebrities." And, insofar as royalty are the symbolic representatives of a people, in America it is not the politicians, or the businessmen, or the Social Registerites, but the "celebrities" who are our royalty.

But this was also the Cinderella story. The lonely prince made the long trip to Philadelphia to fit the glass slipper. That the foot in question belonged to a millionaire's movie-star daughter is less relevant than that she participated in the Typical American Girl myth, her father was an ex-hod carrier, and her name was "Kelly."

Then again, there was nostalgia for a bygone era when princes mattered, priests were important, the political future of a country could really depend on the begetting of an heir — and pageantry was normal. In Monaco it is possible to participate in the medieval ethos with a relatively clear democratic conscience since the last absolute monarch in Europe is more tourist attraction than threat to freedom, and his 370-acre principality is already cluttered with exiled royalty who are obvious evidence that their day is done.

Yet, there remains a type of rhetorical question which has always seemed perverse in other connections, but which one now wishes to paraphrase: why get excited about a marriage in Monaco when we have plenty of good, down-to-earth, democratic, American weddings right here at home? Take the one in Independence, where the father of the bride was concerned only to express approval of "Margaret's young man" and to do what he could toward "keeping the wimmenfolks calm."

A. W. H.

Three Snapshots of the South

ROGER L. SHINN

IN THE broad and diverse area called "The South" one can find almost anything short of penguins and ski-tows. An unconfirmed rumor states that some Texas ranches boast even these. Variety is part of the South, as of all our regions.

We do not all favor killing a Negro boy who may or may not have said something offensive to a white woman. We do not all approve of Senator Eastland. On the other hand, we do not all have the calm courage of the Montgomery bus boycott leaders. Though most of us are churchmen, we do not all consistently live out the New Testament conviction that "in Christ all are one."

No one can paint an adequate portrait of the South today. What one can do is take snapshots. Three snapshots, which I got on one weekend, belong in a portrait of the South.

Snapshot I: Yearning

A week end conference of students had brought together young people from a number of schools—some state universities, some church colleges. The theme of the conference concerned Christ, with no specific mention of social issues. Yet the worship service, by the delegation from a college about as "deep South" as one can get, centered on justice and brotherhood. The dramatic script, read by a speech choir behind drawn curtains, included many statements from the Bible about God's concern for the oppressed.

An illuminated Cross was the one visible symbol. From behind the curtains two right arms reached out, the hands clasped before the base of the Cross. The one skin was light, the other dark. The spoken words and the visible sign conveyed the same message of Christian love surmounting social barriers.

Just one note of irony marked the worship. *The colored hand and arm were stained dark with stage make-up.*

The worship expressed a yearning in the face of reality. To admit a Negro to the college leading the worship would threaten its survival. To bring Negroes to this week-end conference would require a vast ecclesiastical change, for which the churches were not ready. But those churches, though bound by conventional ways of life, still preserved a gospel; and these youthful Christians had seen past the conventionalities to that gospel.

Snapshot II: Achievement

Some of the students at that week end conference told me of their trip to the quadrennial conference

of the Student Volunteer Movement last Christmas vacation. They started in a chartered bus down near the Gulf of Mexico. According to the general plan for the conference, delegations included about one-half American citizens, one-half students from other lands who are studying in our colleges. Among the varied racial groups on the bus were representatives from a Negro college.

I met the gracious and tactful woman who had planned the bus trip. She described the group adventure. At mealtime the bus stopped. She entered a restaurant alone and explained: "I have a bus full of students going to an interracial conference. Can you serve us?" She didn't have to tell me that she inquired in an unmistakably Southern accent; that's the only way she could have asked.

Sometimes the response came: "Yes, we'll serve you. Have the colored folks come around to the back."

Then she answered. "No. These students won't eat unless they can all eat together."

Sometimes her persuasiveness won acceptance. When it did not, the group went on and tried elsewhere.

At the one motel stop the same procedure worked, with the bus driver as the spokesman. The students and their leaders did not stop to crusade or argue or educate the public. Such aims have their own justification; but these students simply wanted to travel, as a group, to a conference. They got there.

This same leader has chaperoned similar busloads of students once or twice a year for some time now. She knows some of her friends think her queer. She is concerned that she is encouraging students to do something their parents resent. But she goes ahead with courage and kindness and poise.

What difficulties might face a similar trip just now, with the feverish tensions of the moment, I cannot say.

Snapshot III: Disgrace

In the worshipping group, watching the clasped hands before the Cross, were students from the University of Alabama. On the same day their classmates back on the campus were rioting over the admission of Miss Autherine Lucy, the first Negro to attend that University. The news brought dismay to our conference. In our conversations some welcomed the opportunity to speak freely, because they knew they could not do so when they got home.

By this time the snapshot is part of a sordid newsreel. Everybody knows how the mob fury rose, how Miss Lucy was required to leave classes, how the court ordered her readmission, how the University then expelled her and (later) one of the student riot leaders. Still nobody knows all that happened.

Among the fairly clear facts are these: (1) Whether or not outsiders instigated the riots (as some charge), they got in on the violence. (2) Some fanatical students with violent racial hostilities incited the crowd. (3) Many of the rioters, steamed up by a basketball victory and ready for something in the nature of a "panty raid," were no more crusading for segregation than the Georgia Tech students some weeks before were crusading for integration when they demonstrated against

their segregationist governor. (4) Some student leaders, though favoring segregation, stood out courageously against the rioting. (5) A minority student-faculty group, with more bravery than many people realize, favors desegregation.

The episode leaves a deep scar. No Northern editorial blasts against the riots have outdone some of those in the South. The outburst of violence has wounded the Southern sense of chivalry, respect for law and order, and the common decency of a great many people. The truculent bravado of some cannot hide the shame of others.

No one can paint an adequate portrait of the South. But day by day the whole South is painting its own self-portrait. As of today that portrait is marked by the lights and shadows of disgrace, achievement, and yearning.

The Lonely Witness of Trevor Huddleston

SHAUN HERRON

The heroism of the Anglican monk, Trevor Huddleston, amid the racial tensions of South Africa has become well known. We have previously published an article by Father Huddleston ("Point of No Return, March 7, 1955) and plan to publish another in the near future. His prophetic account of his experiences, Naught for Your Comfort (Doubleday and Co., \$3.75), will be published this week. The following is excerpted from an article by the editor of the British Weekly in the issue of April 5, 1956.

I REMEMBER during the debate in our churches in Britain on the Bantu Education Act, a well-known churchman who was much involved in it said to me: — "The trouble about Huddleston is that he wants to do something quick and dramatic. We on the other hand think this matter can only be dealt with at the painfully detailed level of everyday life."

There is nothing quick and dramatic about finding a dozen African families with the roofs torn off their houses by Order, about going to the Courts to plead for them, about rising, trembling with fear, and being threatened by the magistrate.

There is nothing quick and dramatic about bathing the babies of several hundred black mothers who are living under sacking in the open because thugs have driven them from their homes and the white authorities refuse to protect them.

The man who has found it so easy publicly and privately to scorn and deplore the life and witness of Trevor Huddleston would not be found doing any of these things. They are not dramatic but they demand more from a man than a fluid vocabulary and a notoriously smooth tongue. And

... they are so practical as to be almost vulgar.

Huddleston will never find a place in those circles where church-illy important people talk . . . about the complexity of situations about which they should be doing something . . .

But he has found his place in Christian history as prophet, priest and saint. He has done more: his work will in time be gathered to the credit of the churches which spurned him, in more than one case maligned him, and in every case were profoundly disturbed by him: disturbed as only a bad conscience can be disturbed. . .

I want to ask you, please, to read Huddleston's book *Naught For Your Comfort*. . . He takes his title from Chesterton's *Ballad of the White Horse*.

"I tell you naught for your comfort,

Yea, naught for your desire,

Save that the sky grows darker yet

And the sea rises higher."

His book is a story of tragedy, the tragedy of the church. The case so complacently presented to our churches in this country during that debate has since those days been shot to pieces by events. . .

There are situations in history when the church

cannot claim any meaningful measure of obedience to her Lord unless she confronts a situation without compromise and with the cry: We must obey God rather than men. The minority Confessing church in Germany did it over the Aryan clause prohibiting Jews from worshipping with "Aryans."

... The timid policy of the churches has been treated with contempt by the Nationalists. Almost every churchman in the Union claims that Huddleston's methods have failed because he has roused the hostility of the Government. It is not a new view of Christian obedience that it is incumbent upon us only when it does not arouse hostility. But as a matter of practical politics, how far has the timid subservience of the churches got them? And since when has "failure," to a Christian, been the measure of right and wrong action? This kind of reasoning throws the gospel out of the church — and then what is the church?

The whole tragic issue is summed up in Huddleston's account of the Archbishop of Canterbury's visit to him, during which the Archbishop told Huddleston how wrong he was. "You are entirely wrong in the methods you are using to fight this situation. . . . The Christian must never use force . . . must never use the weapons of his opponent."

This statement will astonish all who know that Dr. Fisher considers it right to use anything that will deter Communism.

... But what is "force"? Huddleston appealing . . . for a "spiritual boycott" of South Africa? Huddleston going to court with a group of Africans whose houses have been torn down and whose families have been thrown into the street? Huddleston asking police to leave a meeting . . . on church premises? Huddleston begging for money to cover the naked, persecuted and exposed? Huddleston saying "Thus saith the Lord. . .?" . . .

The gospel itself is force. It is force that good men have tried to stifle and control in every generation. And in this generation we are adding daily to the tragedy of Christian disobedience. . .

Huddleston says:

"If I am mistaken, as well I may be, in the methods I have used: then I trust in the mercy of God for my forgiveness. For He, too, is a Person. And it is His Person that I have found in Africa, in the poverty of her homes, in the beauty and splendour of her children, in the patience and courtesy of her people. But above all, I have found Him where every Christian would expect to find Him: in the darkness, in the fear, in the blinding weariness of Calvary.

"And Calvary is but one step from the Empty Tomb."

CORRESPONDENCE

Political Pealism

To the Editors: It is depressing to find in *Christianity and Crisis* for April 2 one editor speaking of the prophetic voice of the church being muffled and another writing as if he had never even heard of prophecy. I refer to the Editorial Notes on the Middle Eastern situation, which are glib, superficial and misleading. They are glib in their suggestion that all the faults are on one side; misleading in the statement that the Russian offer of arms to Egypt has made the Arab world neutralist; and superficial because they say that if America and Britain were to join in giving Israel arms, "this would end the tension between our two nations."

This is political Pealism. It is possible to present a case for supplying arms to Israel, though I confess myself dubious of the wisdom of such a policy, but to say that it would end Anglo-American tension in the Middle East is to betray serious ignorance of the complexities of the situation. To write as if only Egypt were guilty of a warlike posture is to disregard roughly one half of the reports of the mixed armistice commission. To pretend that Arab neutralism dates from the Egyptian arms deal is to ignore Arab history for at least the last twenty years. . . .

A. Denis Baly
New York, New York

Not All Euphoria

To the Editors: I am very glad that you printed William Farmer's article, "Cynicism and the Religious Revival" (April 2). It is a much needed emphasis for those of us who read your journal.

I only wish that Waldo Beach would read it and ponder it, for I have seldom read anything as cynical as his article in the same issue. . . .

Certainly our suburban churches need criticism, certainly we need to be warned against the perils that are all around us and in our church life, but there is no call for Dr. Beach's all-out condemnation. . . .

Dr. Beach would do us suburban Christians, and the whole of the cause of Christ, a much greater service, if he would show us how to avoid the pitfalls and dangers that beset us all around, instead of just hitting us over the head. . . .

Pray for us, brethren, help us — don't just slam us!

Rev. Kenneth A. Coates
El Cerrito, California

To the Editors: . . . As an analysis of American Protestantism, and indeed, one might almost say, Christendom in America, I thought the article to be quite good. As indicated by the title, however, the article was not . . . a general appraisal of Protestantism in America. Rather it was aimed at that vulnerable segment of American Protestantism — "suburban Christianity." It was precisely at this point that I wish strongly to take issue with Mr. Beach's article.

In some Protestant circles "suburban" and "sub-

urbia" have become new and convenient swear words.

... This kind of prophetism, however, is a very dubious sort of proclaiming the Gospel. It picks "suburbia," one segment of the American socio-economic scene. It picks it because here in "suburbia" the values inherent in American culture have been attained. Here in "suburbia" the dreams of a "ranch-type house," the new car, and a 20" TV have been actualized. But the thing which this Protestant prophetism does not take real cognizance of is that the values which are realized in "suburbia" are actually inherent in the very stuff of American life in every stratum of the socio-economic hierarchy.

The kind of "religiosity" "typified" by the suburban man who commutes via railroad or Cadillac to and fro from "beyond the mink curtain" (or whichever generalization seems cutest) embodies the same values which govern more or less the lives of a seminary faculty, an East Harlem tenement dweller, a "struggling" truck farmer, or anyone else. We simply deceive ourselves — often to the point that the truth is not in us — when we focus what prophetic insight God has granted us on the analysis and abuse of any one segment of the total socio-economic scene here in America.

Perhaps as we permit our prophetic invectives to weigh more heavily on our own hearts, our prophetism will focus less on clichés such as "suburbia," and more on the idolatry which permeates the deeper levels of all of our lives as twentieth century Americans in an age of prosperity. ... since all of us — not just the suburban man — are guilty of hearing but not hearing, seeing but not perceiving.

Arthur Anderson
New York, New York

Mr. Beach Replies

It is interesting that the editorial comments on suburban Christianity elicited such a thoughtful and spirited response from our readers. It should be made clear, however, that the title gave the misleading impression that our criticism was directed exclusively against a number of churches in particular geographical neighborhoods. In fact, Suburbia is a state of mind and a condition of culture much more than a section of town. The spirit of suburban Christianity sets the tone for the rural as much as for the urban church. Thus, the writer was in no sense exempting himself or his own church from the criticism made. W.B.

Cynicism, etc.

To the Editors: Many of your readers will be grateful to Professor Farmer and Dr. Van Dusen for their forthright challenge (*Christianity and Crisis*, April 2) to the rather wholesale criticism of Dr. Graham that is current in certain circles of the religious intelligentsia and the "God-deliver-us" apprehensiveness with which a Graham campaign is regarded by many in New York City and elsewhere.

It occurs to me that it might be well for all of us to inquire what we mean by ecumenicity. ...

Is it something that takes place only when one denomination officially joins with others in religious or social activity, or is it an attitude that commits us as individuals to cooperation with all who sincerely labor to proclaim the gospel of Christ and win disciples for him?

... Reserving the right and duty to differ and to proclaim the differences, does not ecumenicity demand that I shall recognize their [Graham, Niebuhr and others] great contribution to the ongoing movement of Christianity, their emphasis upon phases of the gospel too easily overlooked and their enrichment of our understanding of our human plight under the judgments of God?

Rev. Albert Edward Day
Baltimore, Maryland

To the Editors: ... The problem is much larger than "Billy Graham vs. New York City." Throughout our nation Protestantism faces the complexities of an urban industrialized society. It appears that Dr. Niebuhr assumes that the great mass of people in New York City are intellectual secularists. They are not, and neither are those in other large metropolitan areas. I find myself in fundamental agreement with Dr. Van Dusen. It is evident that the intellectual, apologetic presentation of the gospel has not been able to effectively bridge the chasm between the Christian faith and the secular and pagan world to reach the simple and common people. ...

... Can it be that we, who are today of the more respectable Protestant witness, are now the modern equivalents of the "wise men," the "scribe" and the "debater of this age," whose wisdom God has now chosen to make foolish? ...

Rev. Walter F. Reif
Elyria, Ohio

To the Editors: Dr. Niebuhr's apprehension about Dr. Graham's visit is shared by a considerable group of the younger clergy in our city who are carrying on the rough, difficult ministry of our slums and "depressed" areas. These men are far from professional chair ministers but are engaging the unchurched and unredeemed core of our city. They are genuinely concerned lest this campaign lead their people astray and lose hard-won ground by perpetuating the idea that the demands of Christian discipleship in the turbulent areas of the city's life can be understood or satisfied by an exciting emotional experience of mass evangelism. They are fearful also lest churches in general in our city become satisfied with a form of evangelism that thinks it has found Christian fellowship apart from the actual sharing of life across the barriers that separate us Christians in the city.

On the other hand it is a little strange to find Dr. Niebuhr singling out a special group of us as in special need of "intelligence and good will" if we are to be won to the gospel. No one has cast more doubt on the power of "intelligence and good will" to save souls than Dr. Niebuhr, unless it was the Apostle Paul.

Souls are saved as the result of confrontation with the living God in Jesus Christ. The important question would seem to be whether Dr. Graham with his unusual gifts can make possible a decisive confrontation for unreached people. What happens after this experience depends entirely upon the ministers and churches. Can they take this experience and give it meaning and relevance for the particular responsibilities of Christian life in our city?

I always looked forward to the coming of Dr. Niebuhr to my church because he provided the kind of drastic confrontation for people of which I was not capable. This did not alter the fact that I had to spend weeks after his coming interpreting and explaining the living and often angry God who faced my people through his prophetic preaching. Yet I always regarded his coming as a blessing.

Possibly Dr. Graham's coming can be so, too. He seems to be a very humble man. Perhaps if we are humble too, we may gain a real blessing.

Rev. Paul Silas Heath
General Presbyterian,
The Presbytery of New York

To the Editors: The strength and weakness of Professor Farmer's article has been adequately assessed by Professor Bennett. There are, however, a number of matters which seem to me to require further comment:

1. Both Professor Farmer and President Van Dusen seem to imply that all criticism, unless backed by proposals which work equally well, is cynical and presumptuous. On this basis, every critical thinker in history would have been stopped.

2. Although our inadequacy in speaking to the problems of men in the churches is the basis in part for the appeal of the popular, short-circuited religion, it does not necessarily follow that those who are guilty must keep quiet . . . Guilt is real but it does not incapacitate us. God's forgiveness was meant for just such dilemmas.

3. The fight is not between a more sophisticated and less sophisticated interpretation of the gospel. It is rather that this gospel is not just a simple version of Christianity but rather its distortion. Part of its appeal lies in the fact that people do want simple answers to complicated questions. It could just be that neither the gospel nor life is as simple as these protagonists think.

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4. It should be recalled that the current religious upsurge presents some problems which previous religious revivals in Protestantism did not have. The element of truth in declaring the world in which we live to be secular is that it has lost its basic Christian frame of thinking. Previous religious revivals . . . occurred in a context in which people still thought about life basically within a Christian frame of reference. This frame or mind set has evaporated. In such a situation revivals which do not bring with them a basic way of thinking about life as well as feelings and strategies, present a new problem. That is why the new religion fits so well into our culture; it does not challenge the culture from a total understanding of life, but rather sanctions it. On this level the antiquated Christian phraseology of Billy Graham is as inadequate as that of Peale.

5. The problem is certainly not one of sincerity. Few indeed have doubted the sincerity of the proponents of the varieties of religious revival, least of all the religion of the President. But there is a real problem when such an obviously good man is invested with such a halo. A good, sincere, unpretentious Christianity may on many levels be the enemy of Christianity itself. Surely this can be said without a sanctimonious or cynical attitude. God will need to have mercy on all of us, but in the meantime we do have a responsibility to fight about truth, including Christian truth.

John Dillenberger
Cambridge, Massachusetts

We regret that we could not, due to lack of space, print more of the lively correspondence we have received on these subjects.

THE EDITORS

CHRISTIANITY and CRISIS

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